



In 2019, the state legislature in Minnesota passed two provisions to help identify and remediate struggling readers in our public schools. These bills were passed in special session as part of the negotiated budget bills between the House, Senate and Governor.

(See Minnesota Session Laws - 2019, 1st Special Session (Session Laws 11, HF 1); available online at: <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/2019/1/Session+Law/Chapter/11/>)

Mandatory dyslexia screening. Authors: Sen. Chamberlain and Rep. Edelson

Current state law requires: (1) districts to identify students not reading at grade level in grades K-2 and (2) districts must provide by 7/1 a summary of the district's efforts to screen and identify students using screening tools such as those recommended by the department's dyslexia specialist.

Starting 7/1/2020 Districts:

- 1) Must screen students identified at not reading at grade level in grades K-2 for signs of dyslexia.
- 2) Must screen students in grade 3 and above unless another reason for the reading difficulty has been identified.

Benefits of new legislation: Screening students not reading at grade level using an inexpensive and easy to administer screening tool to identify students with characteristics of dyslexia early, will get those students into interventions sooner, and help districts match appropriate interventions to the student. It will also provide parents with information they need to make decisions when working with the school districts or seeking a private provider for intervention.

Teacher Training requirements to include dyslexia. Authors: Sen. Clausen and Rep. Kunesh-Podein (Chair, House Education Policy)

Effective 6/1/2020:

- All board approved teacher preparation programs for teachers of elementary education must require instruction:
 - 1) in applying comprehensive, scientifically based or evidence-based, and structured reading instruction programs that:
 - 2) teach students to read using foundational knowledge, practices, and strategies so that all students achieve continuous progress in reading.
 - 3) This legislation removed “balanced” from reading instruction programs under this section.
- All board approved teacher preparation programs for teachers of elementary education, early childhood education, special education, and reading intervention must include instruction on dyslexia.

Teacher preparation programs may consult with the Department of Education, including the dyslexia specialist to develop instruction under this paragraph.

Instruction on dyslexia must be modeled on practice standards of the International Dyslexia Association, and must address:

- 1) the nature and symptoms of dyslexia;
- 2) resources available for students who show characteristics of dyslexia;
- 3) evidence-based instructional strategies for students who show characteristics of dyslexia, including the structured literacy approach; and
- 4) outcomes of intervention and lack of intervention for students who show characteristics of dyslexia.

Benefits of new legislation: These crucial education pieces for pre-service teachers should help address what two independent bodies found – a general lack of knowledge among teachers about dyslexia and how to remediate struggling readers.

In 2018 research conducted by the National Council on Teacher Quality found that only 5 of Minnesota's 24 teacher preparation programs received an "A" rating with regard to teacher preparation in the teaching of reading. The NCTQ graded programs using the major findings in the 2001 report by the National Reading Panel

In 2016 Decoding Dyslexia conducted a survey of teachers in Minnesota finding that:

- 75% report they received no training in appropriate interventions to teach students with dyslexia.
- Only 28% said that had extensive experience working with a student who seems unresponsive to intervention.
- 94% of teachers surveyed stated they were *very interested* or *interested* in learning more about recognizing dyslexia and instructional strategies for students with dyslexia.

Questions?

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